



County of San Diego
DEPARTMENT OF ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
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FACT SHEET
MANAGEMENT OF HOME-GENERATED SHARPS
FOR HEALTHCARE PROVIDERS

The County of San Diego, Department of Environmental Health's Hazardous Materials Division (HMD) is the designated local enforcement agency that implements the [Medical Waste Management Act](#) throughout the entire County.

Recent changes in California law (Medical Waste Management Act) prohibit the disposal of home-generated sharps into the regular trash. This includes containers used to collect solid waste, recyclable materials, or green waste.

"Home-generated sharps waste" means hypodermic needles, pen needles, intravenous needles, acupuncture needles, lancets, blades, and other medical devices that are used to penetrate the skin for the delivery of medication or to conduct a blood test derived from a household, including a multifamily residence or household.

As of September 1, 2008, home-generated sharps can only be disposed of at the following:

- A household hazardous waste facility.
- Using sharps waste mail-back containers approved by the California Department of Public Health.
- A medical waste generator's facility (i.e. private doctor's office).
- A "home-generated sharps consolidation point".

HOW CAN YOU FIND THESE OPTIONS FOR YOUR PATIENTS?

Household Hazardous Waste Facility: Household hazardous waste programs vary from city to city. Not all programs accept sharps at their collection facilities or during household hazardous waste collection events, so please contact them in advance.

- The [County Household Hazardous Waste Program](#) lists contacts
- The [Cal Recycle](#) has a list online
- The San Diego County can also provide information at: (858) 505-6880

Approved Mail-Back Service:

- Visit the [California Department of Public Health](#) - Medical Waste Management website or call (916) 449-5671 for a list of approved mail-back services.
- Some local drugstores or family clinics sell approved pre-paid mail-back sharps containers.

As a Medical Waste Generator Facility you can accept Home-Generated Sharps provided that:

- You have a [Unified Program Facility Permit](#) with HMD
- A patient, a member of the patient's family, or a person authorized by HMD transports the sharps to your facility.
- You accept the sharps waste at a central location and then consolidate it with your other medical waste.
- You include a description of how the waste will be managed in your [Medical Waste Management Plan](#).

As a Medical Waste Generator Facility you can also accept Home-Generated Sharps as a [“Home-Generated Sharps Consolidation Point”](#):

Any location approved by HMD can collect and consolidate sharps as a “home-generated sharps consolidation point.” A home-generated sharps consolidation point has to satisfy three conditions listed below. It is not subject to permit requirements or fees so your facility would not be subject to any additional requirements. A home-generated sharps consolidation point is not considered the generator of the waste. It does not have to maintain medical waste tracking documents for this waste. A home-generated sharps consolidation point has to:

- Make a one-time [notification/application](#) to HMD and receive approval prior to collections.
- Store all sharps waste in approved sharps containers or other containers approved by HMD.
- Sharps containers ready for disposal must not be held for more than seven (7) days without the written approval of HMD.

If you decide to become a home-generated sharps consolidation point please do not hesitate to request approval of any reasonable conditions in your application. Examples of conditions are holding sharps containers for 30 days prior to disposal instead of seven (7) days or accepting sharps in any closed, puncture resistant container instead of an approved sharps container.